GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2012
AAKASH TABLET FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS
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Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has launched low cost tablet Aakash for the benefit of students;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether its quality, performance and availability are not upto the mark and are drawing much criticism;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the losses incurred to the Government on the launch of the same;

(d) whether the Government has any proposal to introduce high quality tablets for the benefit of the students and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Aakash tablets are proposed to be distributed free of cost among poor students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and Other Backward Classes and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. D. PURANDESWARI)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Under the National Mission on Education through Information Communication Technology (NMEICT) scheme, a Low Cost-Access-cum-Computing Device (LCAD) named Aakash was launched on 5th October, 2011. In the first phase of the project sanctioned to IIT Rajasthan, 1,00,000 tablets being procured, were targeted to the students in Higher Technical Education institutions so as to further ascertain technical feedback on its operation and usability. After the launch, initial feedback showed the areas where improvements were required. These were (i) heating of the device (ii) need for longer battery life (iii) need for capacitive instead of resistive touch screen (iv) need for better processor etc. The matter was taken up with the vendor and he agreed to make changes including upgrading the processor from 366 MHz Arm 11 based processor to 700 MHz Arm Cortex A8 processor, improving firmware, replacing the battery of 2100 mAH with a battery of 3200 mAH capacity and replacement of resistive touch screen with capacitive one with no enhancement in cost. As no payment was made by IIT Rajasthan to the vendor, hence, no loss has been incurred to the Government.

(e) Sir, presently, no such proposal is there.